

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

Application number: 87300808.0

Int. Cl.⁴: **H 01 C 7/12**

Date of filing: 29.01.87

Priority: 29.01.86 GB 8602112 29.10.86 US 924486

Date of publication of application:
19.08.87 Bulletin 87/34

Designated Contracting States:
AT BE CH DE ES FR GB GR IT LI LU NL SE

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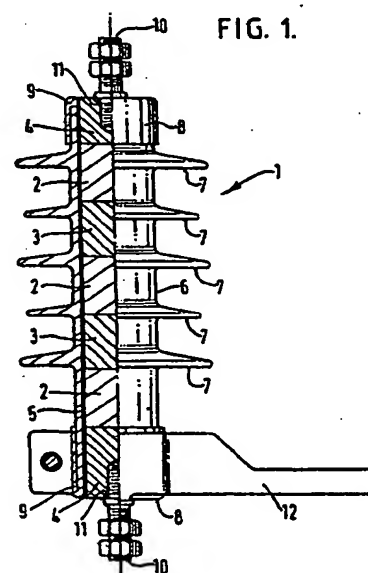
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Electrical surge arrester/diverter.

A distribution class surge arrester comprises a core formed of distributed zinc oxide varistor blocks, aluminium blocks acting as heat sinks and as spacers providing voltage grading and required arcing distances, and terminal blocks held in face to face contact by means of a glass reinforced epoxy shell which is formed by winding a pre-preg onto the assembled blocks and thermally curing under mould pressure within an evacuated mould. The core is housed within a polymeric shedded housing which is formed by shrinking a heat-shrink shedded sleeve onto the core with a sealant provided in the interface of the core and the sleeve, and end-caps are sealed to the ends of the structure thus formed. The all solid-state arrester thus formed has performance and cost advantages over conventional porcelain housed arresters and furthermore has very considerable physical strength enabling it to serve additionally as a stand-off support insulator in situations where conventionally separate arrester and support insulators were required.



Description

ELECTRICAL SURGE ARRESTER/DIVERTERField of the Invention

This invention concerns improvements in or relating to electrical surge arresters, also known as electrical surge diverters, as used particularly, though not exclusively, in electrical power distribution systems for the safe handling of atmospherically induced surges, arising from lightning strikes for instance, and over-voltages caused by switching operations.

Background of the Invention

As is well known in the surge arrester art and as is described for example in Adveenko et al U.S. Patent 4,298,900 issued November 3, 1981, surge arresters commonly have comprised a non-linear voltage-dependent resistor arrangement contained within the bore of an externally shedded glazed porcelain insulator housing. The non-linear resistor arrangement commonly has comprised a series arrangement of varistor elements formed principally of silicon carbide or zinc oxide for example and, as disclosed in Matsuoka et al U.S. Patent 3,805,114 issued April 16, 1974, the varistor elements can be in series with one or more discharging or spark gaps. In the event of a voltage surge on a line connected to ground (earth potential) by way of the surge arrester, the spark gaps are adapted to spark over and to put a transient earth fault on the line for the duration of the surge, the series varistor elements adopting a temporary low resistance condition such as to limit the power follow current which can flow through the arrester to a level which can be cleared by the spark gaps.

The commonly utilized porcelain housing has placed severe and serious constraints upon the manufacture of surge arresters. It has been conventional to vacuum dry the assembly of the non-linear resistor arrangement with the porcelain housing and to fill the arrester with an inert gas prior to final sealing. It is also conventional, particularly in the case of larger sized, station class arresters but also in the case of smaller distribution type arresters, to provide a pressure relief diaphragm at one or both ends of the porcelain insulator housing, as disclosed for example in U.S. Patent 4,298,900 above-mentioned, with such diaphragm(s) being adapted to rupture in the event of an over-pressure occurring in the gas filling of the arrester as a result of the expansion of this gas when the arrester operates to divert a current surge to ground. The purpose of these provisions has been to protect the porcelain housing against explosive shattering which otherwise can occur with corresponding risk to life and property; the bush fires which in recent years have ravaged vast areas of Australia are believed to have been caused, in some instances at least, by explosive shattering of porcelain arrester housings and the resultant spewing out of high temperature fragments over an area of several hundred square yards. The cost of the porcelain housing itself

contributes very significantly to the cost of a conventional surge arrester provided with such a housing, and the cost of the treatments and arrangements which have been considered necessary to minimize or isolate the danger it presents by virtue of its risk of explosive shattering have caused the overall cost of a surge arrester to be relatively high. Given these disadvantages, there have been various previous attempts made to construct a surge arrester, suitable at least for electrical power distribution applications, which does not use a porcelain insulator housing, but to our knowledge and belief no such surge arrester has been made commercially available.

In British Patent 867901 (Westinghouse) issued May 10, 1961 the above and other disadvantages of porcelain housings in surge arresters are discussed, and it is proposed instead to use a plastic moulded housing encasing the spark gaps and varistor blocks. However, the patent goes on to discuss problems of deterioration of the plastic housing by exposure to the ultraviolet radiation in sunlight and proposes as one solution to these to shroud the polyethylene housing within an outer porcelain housing. This patent thus seeks to solve the problems of porcelain housings by means of a solution which itself gives rise to such problems as to invite the addition of a porcelain housing to alleviate them. The problems of porcelain arrester housings are also discussed in Westrom U.S. Patent 3,727,108 issued April 10, 1973 which proposes instead to encapsulate the spark gaps and varistor blocks of the arrester within a housing formed of elastomeric material. In West German Patent 1,638,120 (Siemens AG) there is disclosed a surge arrester in which the arrester housing is of moulded synthetic resin material. Despite these prior proposals, surge arresters to the present day commonly comprise porcelain housings notwithstanding the problems associated therewith.

Yet another proposal is contained in British Patent 2,073,965 assigned to the assignees of the present invention and issued May 2, 1984 and comprises a surge arrester formed as a stack of varistor blocks capped at each end by means of an appropriate termination and with a shedded sleeve of heat-shrink material encasing the assembly, the heat-shrink material being a high voltage electrical insulator capable of withstanding the electric potential of a lightning strike for example without dielectric breakdown. Such a surge arrester promised to provide an elegant and advantageous solution to the porcelain insulator problem and with other advantages of ease of fabrication and cost benefit. However, whilst the design of the proposed surge arrester was elegantly simple and is theoretically viable, experience has shown that the proposed arrester did not lend itself to volume manufacture.

A similar surge arrester to that proposed in British Patent 2,073,965 abovementioned is described in Russian Patent Specification 853,728 and comprises

a stack of varistor blocks interleaved with metal contact plates and encased within a heat-shrink material housing. The surge arrester described in this Russian Patent is not considered to be an efficacious design on account of the inevitability that the shrinking down of the heat-shrink material housing onto the assembled varistor blocks and metal contact plates would entrap air thereby leading to risk of local ionization and flashover failure of the arrester. The disclosure of this Russian Patent thus does not provide a solution to the problems of prior art surge arresters.

Objects and Summary of the Invention

It is therefore a principal object of the present invention to provide a surge arrester wherein the design of the arrester is such as to lend itself to volume production.

Another object of the invention is to provide a solid state surge arrester which can be produced relatively simply and consistently and does not present the hazardous risk of explosive fragmentation associated with conventional porcelain housed arresters, and furthermore has no requirement for special pressure-relief facilities such as rupturable diaphragms on account of exhibiting zero air entrapment.

Yet another object of the invention is to provide a surge arrester which is of such robust construction that it can advantageously be utilized in place of a support insulator in a cabling system thereby performing the dual functions of surge arrester and support insulator and dramatically reducing installation and accessory costs whilst diminishing the environmental detraction caused by complex and unsightly installations.

Yet another object of the invention is to provide advantageous methods for the manufacture of the subject arrester.

These and other objects of the invention are achieved by utilizing a surge arrester construction wherein varistor valve blocks, formed of zinc oxide non-linear resistor material for example, and similarly shaped metal heat sink/spacer elements are formed into a distributed linear array between first and second metal terminal blocks, and the said array is structurally stabilized by being encased within a shell of glass fibre reinforced epoxy resin material (or the like) which is firmly bonded to the external surface of the array. The thus formed structurally stabilized array is then utilized as the core assembly for a surge arrester wherein an outer housing of heat-shrink or mechanically-released elastomeric or in-situ moulded synthetic resin or polymeric material advantageously, though not essentially, formed with integral sheds is provided onto the core assembly. The glass fibre reinforced epoxy resin shell serves to retain the valve blocks, the terminal blocks and the heat sink/spacer elements in intimate face contact with each other and is applied in a manner to avoid air entrapment within the structure or resin intrusion between the respective parts. The resulting core assembly displays a very high degree of structural integrity even under the most testing conditions.

Varistor valve blocks are commonly available in

cylindrical form with metallized aluminium contacts on their flat end faces and with their circumferential curved surface coated with an electrically insulating material. The heat sink/spacer elements are preferably formed of aluminium or an aluminium alloy as cylinders of the same diameter as the varistor valve blocks. The varistor valve blocks are provided in sufficient number to give the desired electrical resistance characteristics for the arrester, and the heat sinks/spacers are provided in sufficient number to give the arrester a sufficient length between its terminals to enable it to withstand its rated voltage without arcing and are distributed with the valve blocks so as to grade the voltage drop throughout the overall length of the arrester.

The reinforced plastics shell could be provided as a preformed tube within which the valve blocks, the terminal blocks and the heat sinks/spacers are assembled and potted with synthetic resin material, but it is preferred in accordance with this invention to first assemble the valve blocks, the terminal blocks and the heat sinks/spacers in their desired array and then to wrap a pre-preg material comprising a resin impregnated textile fabric or mat of fibrous reinforcing material about the array with the array held in axial compression and thereafter cure the resin. It is necessary, as will be appreciated, to ensure that no air is entrapped within voids in the core assembly and to this end the invention proposes to cure the resin in the pre-preg material within an evacuated mould arranged to form the resin material closely about the valve block array; various methods and apparatuses for achieving this will be described hereinafter.

Having thus formed the arrester core, the assembly to the core of the outer housing of heat-shrink material (sometimes referred to as heat-recoverable material) or mechanically released elastomeric material or in-situ moulded synthetic resin material is a simple matter. Heat shrink sleeves with integral sheds which are suitable for this purpose are available from Raychem Limited and are the subject of Raychem's British Patents 1,530,994 and 1,530,995 the disclosures whereof are incorporated herein by way of reference. The heat-shrink material has desirable anti-tracking and other electrical properties which adapt it to utilization as a high voltage electrical insulator. A mastic sealant is utilized within the heat-shrink sleeve to ensure that the interface between the outer housing of heat shrink material and the reinforced plastics shell of the arrester core is void free and impervious to moisture penetration etc., and such mastic sealant is also available from Raychem Limited. As an alternative to heat-shrink material, an elastomeric material could be used, the elastomer sleeve being mechanically expanded and introduced onto the core and then being released so as to elastically contract into tight engagement with the core surface, a weather-proof sealant preferably sealing the interface between the core and the elastomer sleeve. Alternatively, the outer housing could be moulded onto the preformed arrester core.

We have found that surge arresters constructed in accordance with the present invention exhibit a very

high physical strength. In many electrical power distribution systems it is conventional, for example where an overhead aerial line connects to a buried cable, to support the connection of the cable end to the line by means of a so-called support insulator, commonly comprising a shedded dielectric body formed of porcelain for example or as a dielectric core within a polymeric sleeve, and to provide as a separate component a surge arrester coupled between the line and ground. By virtue of the considerable strength of a surge arrester constructed in accordance with the present invention and its non-explosive failure mode performance, the conventional arrangement can be modified by dispensing with the support insulator altogether and utilizing the surge arrester also as support insulator. This has significant cost and environmental advantages.

The invention also extends to an apparatus specifically designed for enwrapping a cylindrical surge arrester core with several turns of a sheet of pre-preg material such as a synthetic resin impregnated glass fibre mat or fabric, the said apparatus comprising means for feeding pre-preg material in sheet form to a cutter for forming pre-preg blanks of pre-determined size, a heated platen for receiving said blanks, and means for rolling a said arrester core upon a said blank received upon said platen so that the core takes up the blank as a plural turn wrapping therearound.

For curing the thus pre-preg enwrapped surge arrester core and simultaneously consolidating or moulding the resin impregnating the pre-preg, the invention further provides a vacuum bag moulding apparatus into which one or more (and preferably a substantial plurality) pre-preg enwrapped arrester cores, suitably encompassed within a release material sheet which is non-adherent to the resin, can be loaded, the said apparatus when evacuated being arranged such that flexible moulding sheets collapse onto and compress the arrester cores. The vacuum bag moulding apparatus further is arranged to be autoclavable for further pressurizing and for heating the arrester cores in order to achieve void-free curing of the resin material in the pre-preg and a smooth and defect-free cured resin surface well adapted to mate with the subsequently added external elastomeric or heat-shrink or in-situ moulded material housing of the arrester.

For heat-shrinking heat-shrink material sleeves onto pre-formed arrester cores, the invention also provides a specially designed vacuum oven as hereinafter described.

Other features and advantages of the present invention will be better appreciated from consideration of the following description of exemplary embodiments of the invention and of the appended claims, the embodiments being described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Description of the Drawings

Figure 1 shows an exemplary surge arrester constructed in accordance with the present invention in part sectional, part side-elevational view;

Figure 2 shows a variety of differently rated surge arresters constructed in accordance with the constructional principles of the surge arrester of Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a chart showing the internal constructional arrangement of the arresters shown in Figure 2;

Figure 4 is a flow diagram illustrating the various stages involved in the manufacture of an exemplary surge arrester according to the present invention;

Figures 5-1, 5-2 and 5-3 schematically illustrate alternative methods of wrapping an array of varistor valve blocks, heat sink/spacer blocks and terminal blocks with pre-preg material;

Figures 6-1 to 6-6 show schematically various different views of an exemplary pre-preg wrapping machine;

Figure 7-1 and 7-2 show schematically a vacuum moulding apparatus for moulding and curing pre-preg wrapped surge arrester cores;

Figures 8-1 and 8-2 show schematically a vacuum oven for heat-shrinking the external heat-shrink material housings onto pre-formed surge arrester core assemblies; and

Figure 9 shows a conventional electric power distribution pole with associated surge arresters and support insulators which can be advantageously modified in accordance with the teachings of the present invention.

Description of the Embodiments

Referring to Figure 1, shown therein partly in sectional view and partly in side elevational view is a surge arrester 1 embodying the invention. The surge arrester 1 comprises metal oxide varistor blocks 2, aluminium alloy heat sink/spacer blocks 3 and terminal blocks 4 structurally combined within a glass reinforced plastics shell 5 which is bonded to the outer cylindrical surfaces of the blocks 2, 3 and 4. The varistor blocks 2, heat sink/spacer blocks 3, terminal blocks 4 and the glass reinforced plastics shell 5 constitute a unitary structural arrester core of great physical strength wherein the facing surfaces of the respective blocks are held in face to face physical and electrical contact without air entrapment or bleed of plastics material. A heat-shrink sleeve 6 with integral sheds 7 of alternating greater and lesser diameter as shown in shrunk about the arrester core with inter-positioning of a fluid mastic material to ensure that the interface between the heat-shrink sleeve and the outer surface of the arrester core is free of voids or air entrapment and cannot be ingressed by moisture. Stainless steel end caps 8 are fitted to each end of the arrester with a silicone rubber or like sealant 9 filling the spaces between the interior of the end caps and the arrester core, and are retained by stainless steel terminal assemblies 10 which are screwthreadedly engaged with the terminal blocks 4 with seals 11 provided to prevent moisture ingress into the mated screw threads. A galvanised steel mounting bracket 12 is shown clamped to the lower end of the arrester about the lower end cap 8. It is to be noted that the

skirt portions of the end caps 8 must terminate on a level with the juncture between the respective terminal block 4 and the varistor block 2 in contact therewith to avoid the establishment of voltage gradients at these two positions which otherwise could detrimentally affect the intervening dielectric material.

The metal oxide varistor blocks 2 are commercially available from Meidensha for example and preferably will comprise zinc oxide non-linear resistor material. The heat-shrink sleeve 6 is available from Raychem and can be sealed against the glass reinforced plastics shell 5 by means of Raychem PPS 3022 sealant for example, and the same sealant could be used for sealing the end caps 8 against the polymeric heat shrink material.

Figure 2 illustrates how a range of differently sized and differently rated distribution class surge arresters can be constructed in accordance with the principles of Figure 1 simply by varying the number and the distribution of the varistor blocks 2 and aluminium heat sink/spacer blocks 3 so as to vary the length of the arrester. The four surge arresters shown in Figure 2 are designated as types EA, EB, EC and ED and their kV ratings, arcing (between end caps) distances, and creepage distances are given in Figure 2 as typical values. Figure 3 is a chart illustrating the arrangement of the constituent blocks in the different surge arrester configurations of Figure 2 and, as will be seen, all four surge arresters are made up of first and second end blocks A and B formed as aluminium alloy cylinders of 32 mm diameter and 35 mm and 40 mm length respectively, heat sink/spacers X and Y formed as aluminium alloy cylinders of 32 mm diameter and 40 mm and 35 mm axial length respectively, and varistor blocks E in the form of cylinders of 32 mm diameter and 30 mm axial length, the different length arresters being made up of different combinations of these basic elements with the varistor blocks distributed through the length of the respective arresters for voltage grading purposes. It will be appreciated that the dimensions of the parts as represented in Figures 2 and 3 are exemplary only and are susceptible of variation.

As compared to an equivalent conventional porcelain housed surge arrester, a surge arrester constructed in accordance with the teachings of Figures 1 to 3 has the significant advantage of displaying a nonexplosive failure mode and affords yet further advantages in that it is light weight, weighing only around half as much as a conventional arrester, and yet is very strong and robust and is resistant to damage through vandalism and improper handling and is unaffected by atmospheric pollutants and impervious to moisture ingress. It has only recently been appreciated that some previously unexplained failures of conventional surge arresters could have resulted (and most probably did result) from the effects of ionization within the arrester producing a reducing atmosphere which increases the electrical conductivity of the varistor elements. These effects are exacerbated by the presence of moisture within the arrester, and by external atmospheric pollution which tends to increase the internal

electrical stressing of the varistor elements. By avoiding the entrapment of gas or moisture within a surge arrester, the present invention completely obviates these problems of conventional surge arresters. Moreover, the surge arrester of the present invention can be manufactured at lower cost than a conventional surge arrester. Given these advantages and given that polymeric heat shrink materials have been utilized in high voltage applications, particularly in cable terminations, for upwards of twenty years and that varistor blocks of the type employed in the inventive surge arrester were initially developed in excess of fifteen years ago and have seen extensive application in surge arresters it may be thought surprising and significant that nobody has previously proposed such a construction.

It will have been noted that the aluminium blocks 3 have been referred to in the foregoing as heat sinks/spacers. This is because the blocks 3 do in fact perform two essential functions. Firstly they serve as heat sinks within the arrester which operate to safeguard the structural integrity of the arrester core by provision of substantial thermal sinks at the faces of the varistor blocks 2, and secondly they serve to elongate the arrester so as to achieve the required arcing distance. In similar fashion, the glass reinforced plastics shell 5 serves the dual functions of providing for the structural integrity of the arrester core assembly and also serving as a thermal barrier. As will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, in the short-circuit failure mode of the arrester (and statistically every arrester is unavoidably liable to fail in this potentially most hazardous mode) which would last only for a fraction of a second until a circuit breaker trips in the associated power system, a very high transient current would flow through the arrester with the generation in consequence of temperatures of the order of 2000°C within the arrester core; the glass reinforced plastics shell serves to protect the polymeric outer housing of the arrester from this transient temperature extreme thereby ensuring the structural integrity of the arrester throughout and after the duration of the transient. A conventional porcelain housed arrester would most likely shatter explosively as a result of such a transient condition.

In the manufacture of surge arresters in accordance with the present invention, the essential prerequisites are that voids and air entrapment must be avoided, and likewise that bleed of fluid plastics materials between the contiguous faces of the varistor blocks and the adjoining terminal and heat sink/spacer blocks must also be avoided. With these requirements, the practice of the invention requires that ceramic varistor valve blocks, aluminium heat sinks/spacers and aluminium end blocks be retained in face contact with each other by encasing in a glass fibre reinforced epoxy shell, and basically there are two alternative methods of achieving this. In accordance with one method, the arrester core blocks can be inserted into a pre-formed and pre-cured glass fibre reinforced epoxy tube, subjected to axial compression within the tube, and epoxy adhesive injected into the tube under vacuum and cured. In accordance with a second method, the

assembled and axially compressed core components are over-wrapped with a glass fibre reinforced epoxy pre-preg and curing is then effected. Whilst both of these methods are theoretically feasible, the second-mentioned method is presently preferred on account of difficulties experienced in practice of the first method in preventing ingress of epoxy material between the faces of the assembled component blocks, though any difficulties in this regard could be obviated by sealing the interstices of the assembled component blocks using an electrically conductive material such as a silver loaded epoxy resin for example.

In the performance of the second method above-mentioned for forming the core assembly, and as will be more fully described hereinafter, the following main production stages are involved as indicated in the process flow chart of Figure 4:

1. Core preparation;
2. Wrapping core with pre-preg; and
3. Curing and moulding.

Taking the arrangement of Figure 1 for illustration and with an arrester type designation EA as per Figures 2 and 3, the core assembly consists of five different components:

1. ceramic varistor elements 'E' 30 mm long;
2. heat sink 'X' 40 mm long;
3. heat sink 'Y' 35 mm long;
4. end block 'A' 35 mm long; and
5. end block 'B' 40 mm long.

Each of the four basic assembly lengths for arrester types EA, EB, EC and ED involves different combinations of the above components. Correct assembly configuration is critical to the operation of the surge arrester, therefore the cores are desirably pre-assembled as a separate operation. The components are thoroughly degreased and cleaned and are then assembled into the required order into a retaining tray or jig where they are held under axial compression, with no further handling necessary after this stage prior to wrapping. This enables the core assemblies to be individually inspected for correct configuration, incorrect assemblies being easily rectified at this stage. The cores should not be removed from the tray until the wrapping stage. If desired, a small amount of a conductive adhesive such as a silver loaded epoxy resin for example can be introduced between the adjoining faces of the varistor, heat sink and end blocks for the purpose principally of sealing the interstices between such adjoining surfaces against intrusions during subsequent manufacturing operations.

Before overwrapping with pre-preg the cores must be pre-heated. This is essential as during the wrapping process the pre-preg must be raised to its softening temperature to enable some resin flow to take place, which allows the pre-preg to conform to the shape of the core, encourages shell to core bonding, prevents air entrapment and consolidates the separate plies. Also, if an electrically conductive resin is utilized as an interstitial seal between the component blocks, the preheating will serve to cure the resin. Pre-heating can be simply accomplished by placing the tray of cores into an air circulating type oven and allowing the cores to stabilise at the

required temperature. This temperature is dependant on the resin formulation but is typically of the order of 50 to 70°C. After heating, the tray of cores can be transferred to the wrapping stage without disturbance. The mass of the solid core elements should prevent too much heat loss prior to overwrapping.

Having assembled the core components in the desired combination and component distribution, the wrapping of the core components can be achieved by means of two basic techniques, namely:

Winding

a) The simplest technique is schematically illustrated in Figure 5-1 and is to rotatably support the core components between centres and overwrap with pre-preg directly from a roll under tension, heat being applied by infra-red heaters or hot air blowers. Wrapping is accomplished by rotating the core until the required number of wraps have been applied. This technique is most suitable for use with small length core assemblies which would resist breaking up under the tension of the pre-preg, and if used for longer lengths would necessitate use of support rollers;

b) A second winding technique is schematically illustrated in Figure 5-2 and uses a three roll type machine. The core is allowed to rest on two support rollers with a third driving roller rotating the core and providing high consolidation pressure. Pre-preg is fed into the rollers and picked up by the pre-heated core. As above, rotation is continued until the required number of wraps is complete. Pre-preg is again fed off the roll under tension. This technique provides good support to the core assembly with the addition of some axial pressure but tends to squeeze resin out of the pre-preg due to the high roller pressure needed to rotate the core. Machines of this type can also cause difficulties in tacking the pre-preg onto the core.

2. Rolling

In this process schematically illustrated in Figure 5-3 the pre-preg is in the form of a cut blank which is laid flat onto a heated platen. The pre-heated core is placed onto the front edge of the blank and simply rolled across the platen to wind on the pre-preg. Consolidation may if required be achieved by the use of second platen above the first, one platen remaining stationary while the other moves laterally to wrap the core, though, since as hereinafter described a moulding process using pressure is utilized during curing, consolidation at the wrapping stage need be only minimal or can be omitted altogether.

Both the winding processes above-mentioned have the disadvantage that pre-preg is taken off a roll, the axis of which is parallel to the tube axis: i.e. the length of shell produced is dependant on the width of the roll. Different lengths of core assemblies would require different roll widths and hence larger stocks of raw material. As compared to the winding

processes, the rolling process has the advantage that the pre-preg is used in the form of a blank. Since the arrester cores are required to have a substantially constant shell thickness of, say, six wraps, one dimension of the pre-preg blank remains constant thus enabling the roll of pre-preg to be of constant width, simply slitting the required length off to suit the core assembly. Only one roll size is therefore needed leading to reduced stock levels and removing the need to change rolls on the machine for different core assemblies. Other advantages arising from the rolling technique are that the pre-preg blank is heated evenly on the platen so preventing or at least minimizing creasing and improving initial softening of the material to roll the shell, the pre-preg blank is not under tension therefore axial pressure only is sufficient to retain the cores, a simple guide roller above the core being sufficient to prevent any flexing due to misalignment of the core elements, and the mechanical design of the rolling machine is simplified with a single heated platen instead of rollers or heater banks, a straightforward drive arrangement, and no tensioning device needed for pre-preg let-off. The process furthermore is versatile in that different lengths and diameters of core assemblies can be produced.

Figure 6-1 through 6-6 shown an exemplary form of rolling machine which we have designed and constructed for the purpose of enwrapping the arrester cores with a pre-preg blank, Figure 6-1 showing a top plan view of the machine, Figure 6-2 a front elevation view, Figures 6-3 and 6-4 respective end elevation views, Figure 6-5 a scrap view illustrating how the core assembly is supported by means of rollers during the wrapping, and Figure 6-6 a further scrap view illustrating the pre-preg feed arrangement.

Briefly stated, the machine of Figures 6-1 to 6-6 is used as explained hereinafter. Pre-preg material in the form of a resin impregnated fibrous mat rolled up with a non-stick release sheet is provided on a feed roll 50 and, as is shown clearly in Figure 6-6, is peeled and pulled off of the feed roll 50 by means of an electrically driven drive roll 51 which winds on the release sheet thereby stripping the release sheet from the pre-preg and at the same time advancing the pre-preg on to the working table of the illustrated machine. The amount of pre-preg that is fed onto the working table of the machine is determined by the adjustable positional setting of a photoelectric sensor 52 which detects the front edge of the advancing pre-preg web and in response thereto halts the advance of the pre-preg web and activates a crush cutter 53 which severs the web widthwise of the working table thereby separating a rectangular blank of pre-preg material of precisely determined size from the pre-preg supply. Thereafter the pre-preg blank is transferred, either manually or automatically, to a temperature-controlled heated rolling platen 54 of the machine which has a non-stick coating of PTFE for example, and the pre-heated core assembly which is to be wrapped is tacked onto the pre-preg blank at one end thereof taking advantage of the natural tackiness of the pre-preg material and is then engaged with the

rolling head 55.

The rolling head 55 is mounted on a cantilevered arm 56 which can be pivoted upwardly as shown in Figure 6-3 to enable the arrester core to be engaged with the rolling head in the manner schematically shown in Figure 6-5 with the arrester core received between a pair of support rollers 57 and positively located by the rollers 57 on the platen 54. The rolling head 55 is mounted on the arm 56 so as to be movable across the platen 54 for rolling the pre-cut pre-preg blank onto the arrester core, such movement preferably being automatically effected under operator supervision so as to ensure that the pre-preg is taken up uniformly onto the arrester core. The cantilevered arm 56 is pivotally movable in a vertical plane for loading and unloading of arrester cores and desirably is arranged to provide a controlled rolling pressure such that the pre-preg wrapping on the arrester core is to a controllable degree consolidated during rolling. The rolling head 55 is arranged to return the arrester core with its pre-preg wrapping to the front of the machine which also assists the consolidation of the pre-preg material. The pre-preg wrapped arrester cores are then unloaded from the machine, either automatically or manually.

The rolling machine thus described is automatically controlled throughout its operations of stripping the backing sheet off of the pre-preg and advancing the pre-preg to the cutter, arresting the advance of the pre-preg in dependence upon the set position of the photoelectric sensor so as to determine the width of the pre-preg blank that is cut from the roll, severing the advanced portion of the pre-preg roll by means of the crush cutter so as to define the blank, and rolling the pre-preg blank onto the arrester core where the temperature of the heated platen is controlled in addition to the actual rolling (length of roll stroke) and consolidation pressure being controlled. In an actual embodiment of the machine that we have constructed, the stripping of the backing sheet and advance of the pre-preg is controlled by suitable control of the electric motor driving the take-up roller 51 and appropriate gearing between the take-up roller 51 and the supply roll 50 to ensure that the pre-preg is delivered to the machine at a constant speed and the backing sheet is taken up under substantially constant tension. The crush cutter 53 is pneumatically operated under control of the photosensor 52 for forward and return strokes, and a pneumatic drive arrangement for the rolling head 55 is also utilized. The rolling platen 54 is uniformly heated by means of a series of flat electric heating elements located beneath the platen and controlled to obtain a platen temperature which is just high enough to soften the epoxy resin in the pre-preg blank without making the same excessively fluid or sticky. The platen temperature can conveniently be adjusted to suit the particular pre-preg material utilized.

Other features of the machine as illustrated in Figures 6-1 to 6-6 form no part of the present invention and will not be described further herein, the description given hereinabove in conjunction with the description given of the inventive surge

arrester and its method of fabrication clearly being sufficient to enable the invention in all of its aspects to be put into effect.

As regards the specification of the pre-preg materials, the following considerations apply. The pre-preg is conveniently a glass fabric reinforced epoxy material utilizing an epoxy resin having good bonding properties and with a cure cycle which is short and straightforward without staging or intermediate temperature dwell periods. The materials should be readily available, and preferably commercial standards, and desirably should have a long shelf life to obviate the need for refrigerated storage. The pre-preg should be easily handled, easily formed and without excess tack, and desirably the softening temperature of the resin should be about 50°C and preferably around 30 to 40°C. Finally, an electrical grade resin should be used with good insulation properties.

An exemplary pre-preg material which satisfies these considerations utilizes a glass fibre fabric having a 7628 weave style which moulds as a pre-preg to 0.008" thick. This is a fine plain weave fabric and is a standard weave style commonly used for electrical laminate reinforcement and is readily available in the U.K. and the U.S.A. Fabric construction is 42 ends warp x 32 picks weft using 75-1/0 yarn. The main parameters for selecting the resin are its performance, cost, processing characteristics and availability. Resin content, flow, softening temperature, degree of tack and even cure cycle can be altered if need be to suit variations in the process. The constituents of one suitable resin system are manufactured by Ciba Geigy and are readily available. The system in question is a brominated Bisphenol-A epoxy using Di-cyandiamide (Dicy) as the curing agent. Liquid un-modified Bisphenol-A may be added to the formulation to bring the softening point down. The system is flame retardant and meets NEMA grade FR-4. It is conventionally used to manufacture high quality electrical laminates particularly printed circuit boards. The resin system comprises:

Resin.....Ciba XD4153 Brominated epoxy
Hardener.....Ciba X83/520 Dicy
Modifier.....Ciba MY750 Bisphenol-A
Cure Cycle.....1/2Hr @ 170/180°C
Softening point.....45/50°C
Resin content.....45% ± 1% by weight

Having wrapped the arrester core assembly with the pre-preg material, the next step is the moulding and simultaneous curing of the epoxy resin. The curing process involves raising the pre-formed core assembly to an elevated temperature and maintaining it for a period of time, the time and temperature being governed by the formulation of the resin system. Pressure is applied during the cure cycle so as to form the resin and encourage the resin to flow throughout the fabric plies and into intimate contact with the underlying core though not between the contiguous faces of the blocks, on account of the relatively high viscosity of the resin and the close fitting nature of the face-to-face block contacts, and/or the provision of an electrically conductive sealing compound between the faces of the blocks.

On full cure the resin is a hard homogeneous solid. The curing process can most satisfactorily be accomplished by heating the core in a mould and for production of substantial quantities of arresters specially designed dedicated tooling is required. The use of a mould allows higher moulding pressures to be used with subsequent improvements in moulding quality and properties, and the manufacturing process becomes less susceptible to variations in pre-preg quality and requires less operator skill. In addition the wrapping process is simplified as good consolidation of the pre-form is not necessary, moulding pressure giving good resin flow and removal of voids particularly if the mould is simultaneously evacuated.

Various methods of mould curing the pre-preg wrapped core assembly are available. Some of the factors influencing mould design are the production rate, the cure cycle, the moulding pressure required, the variations in component length and diameter to be accommodated, and the capital cost. At a production rate of say 15 components per hour and a cure cycle of say 1/2 hour at 170°C, an eight cavity tool would be required. This tool would be approximately 600 mm long x 400 mm wide and the cavities would require soft (e.g. silicone rubber) lining to allow for variations in diameter of the ceramic elements. A moulding pressure of 15 to 20 p.s.i. would require a tool closing force of approximately 4 tons. A press of sufficient platen area to accommodate the tool, and with heated platens, would be prohibitively expensive and would be vastly over-rated on available ram pressure. A heated tool supported by a fabricated framework and pressured by a simple hydraulic jack could be manufactured specifically for the process at significantly lower capital cost. It would also occupy less floor space than a commercial press and would probably be more economical to run.

An alternative and more practical closed mould technique is illustrated in Figures 7-1 and 7-2 and uses a vacuum bag. This is effectively a flexible mould with a frame to retain the components. On application of vacuum the bag seals around the edges and forms to the shape of the component applying pressure evenly to all surfaces. Curing is accomplished by heating in an air circulating oven or better still in an autoclave (with the advantage that additional external pressure can be applied). Air entrapment is prevented by the application of vacuum throughout the cure cycle. This technique has a low capital cost for tooling especially if an oven and vacuum pumping equipment is already available. Production rates are not as high as for matched metal moulds as the heat transfer rates are slower. However, additional moulding bags (i.e. extra tool cavities) can be added at very low cost.

Referring more particularly to Figure 7-1, the exemplary vacuum bag assembly schematically illustrated therein in transverse cross-section, and exemplarily showing provision for curing only of three surge arrester assemblies in side-by-side relationship though in practice many more assemblies would be accommodated, comprises an upper portion 60 and a lower portion 61 adapted to seat

together as shown and to seal together for the evacuation of the chamber thus defined therebetween. The upper portion 60 comprises a rectangular open frame 62 having a silicone rubber membrane 63 secured thereto in an airtight manner and provided with a sealing strip 64 for sealing to the lower portion. The lower portion 61 comprises a similar frame 65 from which there is supported a lattice of support rods 66 which serve to define as shown a series of depending folds 67 in a silicone rubber membrane sealed to the frame 65. Surge arrester core assemblies 68 are schematically shown within the folds 67, and it will be appreciated that when the two portions of the vacuum bag assembly as illustrated are brought together and the intervening space evacuated, the silicone rubber membranes 63 and 67 collapse around the core assemblies 68 so as to exert a moulding pressure upon the same which is intensified if the vacuum bag assembly is introduced into a pressurized atmosphere as in an autoclave for instance. The silicone rubber membranes 63 and 67 are, as shown in Figure 7-1, lined with disposable air-permeable breather ply 69 to facilitate the evacuation of the air space therebetween.

To ensure that the pre-preg wrapped surge arrester core assemblies 68 do not adhere to the breather ply 69 or to the silicone rubber membranes 63 and 67, the core assemblies coming off the rolling machine hereinbefore described are first carefully wrapped with a release film or peel ply to which the epoxy is non-adherent. Then, to avoid the formation of creases or wrinkles in the cured resin the peel ply wrapped core assemblies are each inserted into a longitudinally split silicone rubber tube of internal diameter substantially equal to the required external diameter of the finished core assemblies, the split in the silicone rubber tube being sealed as for example by means of a metal shim or the like to ensure that the arrester core surface after moulding does not have a moulding defect corresponding to the split in the silicone rubber tube. Referring to Figure 7-2, the core assembly 68 as it comes from the pre-preg rolling machine is shown wrapped in a release film layer 70 which in turn is embraced by the split silicone rubber tube 71 with a shim 72 underlying the split in the tube. Reference numerals 73 designate temperature-resistant adhesive tape used for securing the various layers in position about the pre-preg enwrapped core assembly 68.

By moulding and curing the pre-preg enwrapped arrester core as hereinbefore described it is ensured that the epoxy resin in the pre-preg is uniformly consolidated about the arrester core without any voids or air entrapments and furthermore the cured epoxy resin has a very smooth surface upon which the external elastomeric or heat-shrink external housing of the finished arrester can readily seat without formation of voids or air entrapments as is of paramount importance in the practice of the present invention if superlative surge arrester qualities are to be ensured.

Having formed the arrester core as hereinbefore described, the assembly of the heat shrink sleeve and the end caps and terminals to the core is a

simple matter. The core assembly is inspected for any resin bleed onto the end faces of the end blocks of the core, and if any such resin bleed has occurred then it is cleaned off by grinding for example. The core assembly may then be cleaned and degreased, if necessary, and assembled with the end caps and terminal components and with the heat shrink sleeve in a simple jig. The sealant for the interface between the heat shrink sleeve and the core may be pre-coated on the inside of the heat shrink sleeve or may be coated onto the core, and the sealant for the end caps can be loaded into the end caps by the operator. Having thus assembled the components, the jig with the assembled components is inserted into an evacuable oven chamber where the assembly is subjected to heat, from radiant infra-red heaters for example, so as to cause the heat-shrink material to shrink down onto the arrester core with any air entrapment being avoided by virtue of the evacuation of the chamber and voids being avoided by virtue of plastic flow of the sealant. The heating and air evacuation similarly cures the sealant in the end caps and ensures that no voids are left therein.

Figures 8-1 and 8-2 illustrate in front and side elevation views respectively an exemplary vacuum oven which we have designed for use in the final heat-shrinking of the surge arrester heat-shrink material external housings onto the surge arrester cores as pre-formed as hereinbefore described. The vacuum chamber of the illustrated apparatus is defined by a cylindrical negative pressure bell 80 which is open at its lower end and which is mounted on vertical guide tracks to be vertically movable relative to a sealing plate 81 provided on the surface of a work-table 82. The sealing plate 81 is provided with an O-ring seal or the like for co-operating with the lower edge of the pressure bell 80 when the same is in its lowered position as shown in Figure 8-2 so as to define a sealed evacuable work chamber. A rotary shaft 83 extends vertically through the centre of the sealing plate 81, with pressure sealing means provided between the surface of the shaft and the plate, and carries at its upper end a receptor 84 adapted to receive therein one end of a surge arrester 85 to be treated in the apparatus. The lower end of the shaft 83 is coupled to a drive motor 86. One or more infra-red radiant heaters are provided within the pressure bell 80 and the arrangement of the rotary receptor 84 with its drive shaft 83 and motor 86 is to rotate the surge arrester 85 relative to the radiant heater(s) so as to ensure that the heat-shrink sleeve of the arrester is uniformly heated. Reference numeral 87 designates a vacuum pump for evacuating the vacuum oven, and reference numeral 88 designates a control module incorporating pressure and temperature monitoring and control equipment and sequence control equipment for monitoring and controlling the overall operation of the oven.

Whilst the oven illustrated in Figures 8-1 and 8-2 has provision only for one surge arrester to be treated at a time, it will be appreciated that for volume throughput a plurality of rotary receptors would be provided in the sealing plate 81 so that a plurality of arresters could be treated at the same

time. As shown, an inspection window is provided in the cylindrical wall of the pressure bell 80.

Referring now to Figure 9, there is shown therein a conventionally dressed power distribution pole for interconnecting overhead three phase power lines to the end of an underground power cable. The figure shows three overhead power lines 91, 92 and 93 supported from a cross arm attached to the pole by means of insulating ties 94, 95 and 96. Connected to each of the power lines 91, 92, 93 is one end of a respective connecting lead 97 the other end of which is supported by means of a respective one of three stand-off support insulators 98 and connected to a respective core of cable 99. Three conventional porcelain-housed surge arresters 100 are supported on a mounting bracket 101 attached to the power distribution pole, and each surge arrester 100 is electrically connected between ground and a respective one of the connecting leads 97. As will be well appreciated by those skilled in the relevant arts, the arrangement illustrated is costly in components and also requires a substantial amount of time to fabricate. In view of the fact that surge arresters in accordance with the present invention have very considerable physical strength, the possibility arises of utilizing such surge arresters in place of the stand-off support insulators 98 in which case the surge arresters 100, their associated mounting bracket 101, and their associated wiring connections can be dispensed with. Thus not only are the surge arresters of the invention cost advantageous in themselves, but also they enable other conventionally required components to be dispensed with which not only is aesthetically and environmentally more acceptable but also enables the time required for fabrication of such a system as is shown in Figure 9 to be significantly reduced.

Having thus described in the foregoing the physical construction of surge arresters in accordance with the invention, apparatuses, methods and materials for their manufacture, and an advantageous exemplary application thereof, it is to be appreciated that variations and modifications, for example the use of a mechanically released elastomeric material or an in-situ moulded synthetic resin material instead of the heat-shrink material herein particularly described, could be made without departure from the essence of the invention which is to encase a rigid solid-state arrester core comprising varistor blocks sealingly and without voids or gaseous entrapments within an outer housing of polymeric heat-shrink material or mechanically-released elastomeric material or in-situ moulded synthetic resin material with a heat shield of dielectric material between the core and the outer housing to preserve the integrity of the outer housing against high temperature transients arising under short-circuit failure conditions. A core assembly manufactured as hereinbefore described could readily be encased within a mechanically released elastomeric housing simply by stretching the elastomer, introducing it onto the core, and then releasing it, possibly within a vacuum environment to ensure that no voids or gaseous entrapments exist between the core and the housing. Likewise, a

synthetic polymer housing could readily be moulded directly onto the core.

Claims

1. A surge arrester comprising an elongate core constituted by a distributed array of varistor blocks and electrically-conductive heat sink/spacer blocks in face to face contact between first and second terminal blocks and with said blocks encased within a rigid shell of reinforced rigid plastics material bonded to the peripheral surfaces of the blocks, and a shedded outer housing for said core comprising a sleeve of polymeric heat-shrink material or elastomeric material shrunk or released tightly onto said core with a weather-proof sealant between the core and the heat-shrink or elastomeric material or comprising in-situ moulded synthetic plastics material.

2. A surge arrester comprising a cylindrical core formed as a distributed array of cylindrical varistor blocks and cylindrical metal heat sink/spacer blocks in face to face physical and electrical contact with each other and disposed between first and second cylindrical terminal blocks and with said blocks encased about their cylindrical curved surface within a rigid shell of reinforced rigid plastics material bonded to the respective surfaces of the blocks, the core thereby comprising a rigid integral structural unit, a shedded outer housing formed as a sleeve of polymeric heat-shrink material having integral external sheds shrunk onto said core with a weather-proof sealant material between, the core and the heat shrink material, and metal end caps capping the ends of the core and of the surrounding outer housing with a weather-proof sealant material sealing the end cap/outer housing/core interface.

3. A surge arrester according to claim 2, wherein said varistor blocks comprise zinc oxide non-linear resistance material.

4. A surge arrester according to claim 2 or 3, wherein said metal heat sink/spacer blocks comprise aluminium.

5. A surge arrester according to claim 2 or 3 or 4, wherein said reinforced rigid plastic material comprises glass reinforced epoxy resin.

6. A surge arrester according to claim 2 or 3 or 4 or 5, wherein said reinforced rigid plastic shell comprises a cured winding of pre-preg material formed upon said core.

7. A surge arrester comprising an elongate cylindrical core, a polymeric sleeve of electrically insulating heat-shrink material having integral sheds shrunk onto said core with a weather-proof sealant between the core surface and the heat-shrunk sleeve so as to achieve a void-free interface therebetween, and end caps capping the interface between the core and the sleeve at both ends thereof and

with a weather-proof sealant between the end caps and the heat-shrunk sleeve so as to achieve a void free interface therebetween, said core comprising a cylindrical terminal block at each end thereof and, between said terminal blocks, a plurality of cylindrical zinc oxide varistor blocks and a plurality of cylindrical aluminium heat sink/spacer blocks distributed to provide voltage grading throughout the length of the core with a predetermined core length arcing distance, said varistor blocks having metallized electrodes on the end faces thereof in physical and electrical contact in each case with the contiguous end face of a respective one of the other type blocks, and said terminal blocks, varistor blocks and heat sink/spacer blocks being retained rigidly together in the core by means of a shell of glass reinforced cured rigid epoxy resin material bonded to the curved outer surfaces of the respective blocks without voids and gas entrapment and formed as a wrapping upon the pre-assembled blocks of a pre-preg material.

8. A method of manufacturing a surge arrester according to claim 1 or 2 or 7, which comprises:

assembling the terminal blocks, the varistor blocks and the heat sink/spacer blocks in the desired distributed array;

applying forces to the terminal blocks so as to compress together all of the blocks in the array;

whilst maintaining said blocks in said array, enwrapping the array of blocks with a pre-preg of a reinforced rigid plastics material;

curing said plastics material in said pre-preg under mould pressure and evacuation so as to bring the plastics material into intimate bonded contact with the blocks without gaseous entrapments and voids and encase the blocks within a rigid shell bonded to the peripheral surfaces of the blocks;

introducing the thus formed core of encased blocks within a shedded sleeve of polymeric heat-shrink material with a fluid weather-proof sealant, therebetween; and

applying heat to shrink said heat-shrink sleeve onto said core in an evacuated chamber so as to avoid gaseous entrapments and voids between the core and the shrunk sleeve.

9. A method according to claim 8 wherein the blocks are maintained in said array by means of electrically conductive adhesive.

10. A method according to claim 8 or 9, wherein the enwrapping of the array of blocks with the pre-preg material is effected by laying a pre-preg blank of suitable size upon a heated table and rolling the array of blocks along the table so that the pre-preg is picked up by the array and wrapped thereon.

11. A method according to claim 10, wherein the enwrapped array of blocks is consolidated by being compressed between said table and an upper table during the rolling operation.

12. A method according to claim 8 or 9 or 10 or 11, wherein the curing of the plastics material

under mould pressure and evacuation is effected using a mould comprised of flexible mould layers adapted to be compressed into contact with a pre-preg enwrapped arrester core assembly therebetween by application of external pressure and evacuation of the internal void between the mould layers.

13. A method according to claim 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12, wherein said reinforced rigid plastics material comprises a woven glass fibre fabric impregnated with uncured epoxy resin.

14. A method according to claim 13, wherein said epoxy resin comprises a Brominated Bisphenol-A epoxy using Dicyandiamide curing agent.

15. A surge arrester according to claim 1 or 2 or 7, when manufactured by a method according to any of claims 8 to 14.

16. A surge arrester comprising an inner rigid core comprising varistor blocks, an external housing comprised of a sleeve of heat-shrink polymeric material shrunk into said core or a sleeve of elastomeric material mechanically released onto said core or comprised of synthetic plastics material moulded onto said core, and a thermal barrier interposed between the core and the external housing and such as to preserve the integrity of the external housing in the event of a transient high temperature arising in the core in a short-circuit failure mode of the arrester, the core/thermal barrier and thermal barrier/external housing interfaces of the arrester being voidless and free of gaseous entrapments.

17. The use of a surge arrester according to any of claims 1 to 7, 15 and 16 as a stand-off support insulator in an installation where the surge arrester performs both functions.

18. A method of construction of an electrical installation wherein an electric line is required to be supported with insulation from a support member and to be protected against transient surges by means of a surge arrester, said method comprising supporting said line by means of a surge arrester according to any of claims 1 to 7, 15 and 16 mounted at one end thereof to said support member and electrically connected at the other end thereof to said line, the arrester terminal at the said one end thereof being grounded.

19. A method of connecting an overhead electricity distribution line to a ground cable at an electricity amenity pole, said method comprising supporting one end of said line from said pole by means of an insulating tie, insulatively supporting the conductor of said ground cable with respect to said pole by means of a surge arrester according to any of claims 1 to 7, 15 and 16 with the conductor of the ground cable connected to the terminal at one end of the surge arrester and the terminal at the other end of the surge arrester connected to ground potential, and electrically connecting the electricity distribution line to the terminal of the surge arrester at said one end thereof, the

surge arrester thereby performing the dual functions of surge arrester and support insulator.

20. An electrical power distribution installation wherein surge arresters according to any of claims 1 to 7, 15 and 16 are utilized as support insulators.

21. An apparatus for enwrapping a cylindrical surge arrester core with a plurality of turns of a sheet of pre-preg material, the said apparatus comprising means for feeding pre-preg material in sheet form to a cutter for forming pre-preg blanks of predetermined size, a heated platen for receiving said blanks, and means for rolling a said arrester core upon a said blank received upon said platen so that the core takes up the blank as a plural turn wrapping therearound.

22. An apparatus according to claim 21 wherein the pre-preg material comprises a roll thereof including an interleaved non-stick backing sheet, and the means for feeding the pre-preg material to the cutter comprises means for tensioning the backing sheet and for peeling and stripping the same off of the pre-preg with a reaction force applied to the pre-preg for advancing the same.

23. An apparatus for curing a pre-preg enwrapped surge arrester core under mould pressure and evacuation, said apparatus comprising flexible mould layers adapted and arranged to be compressed into contact with the pre-preg enwrapped core disposed therebetween inter alia by evacuation of the internal void between the mould layers.

24. A vacuum oven comprising a pressure bell adapted to be removably disposed upon a sealing plate to define an evacuable chamber, and means for mounting an article to be heated in said oven within said evacuable chamber, the last-mentioned means being such as to enable the article to be turned so as to be uniformly heated by said heater.

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FIG. 1.

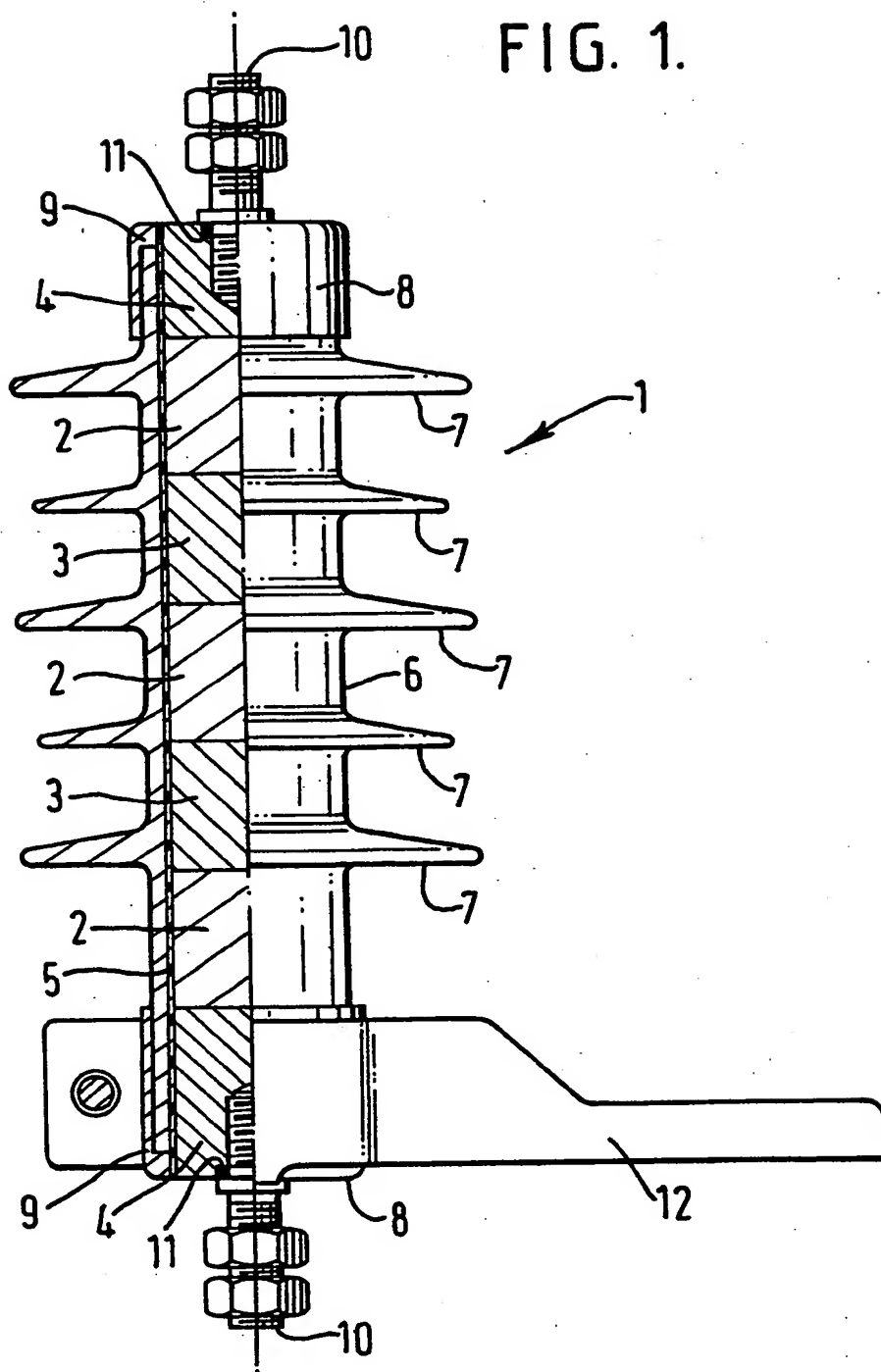
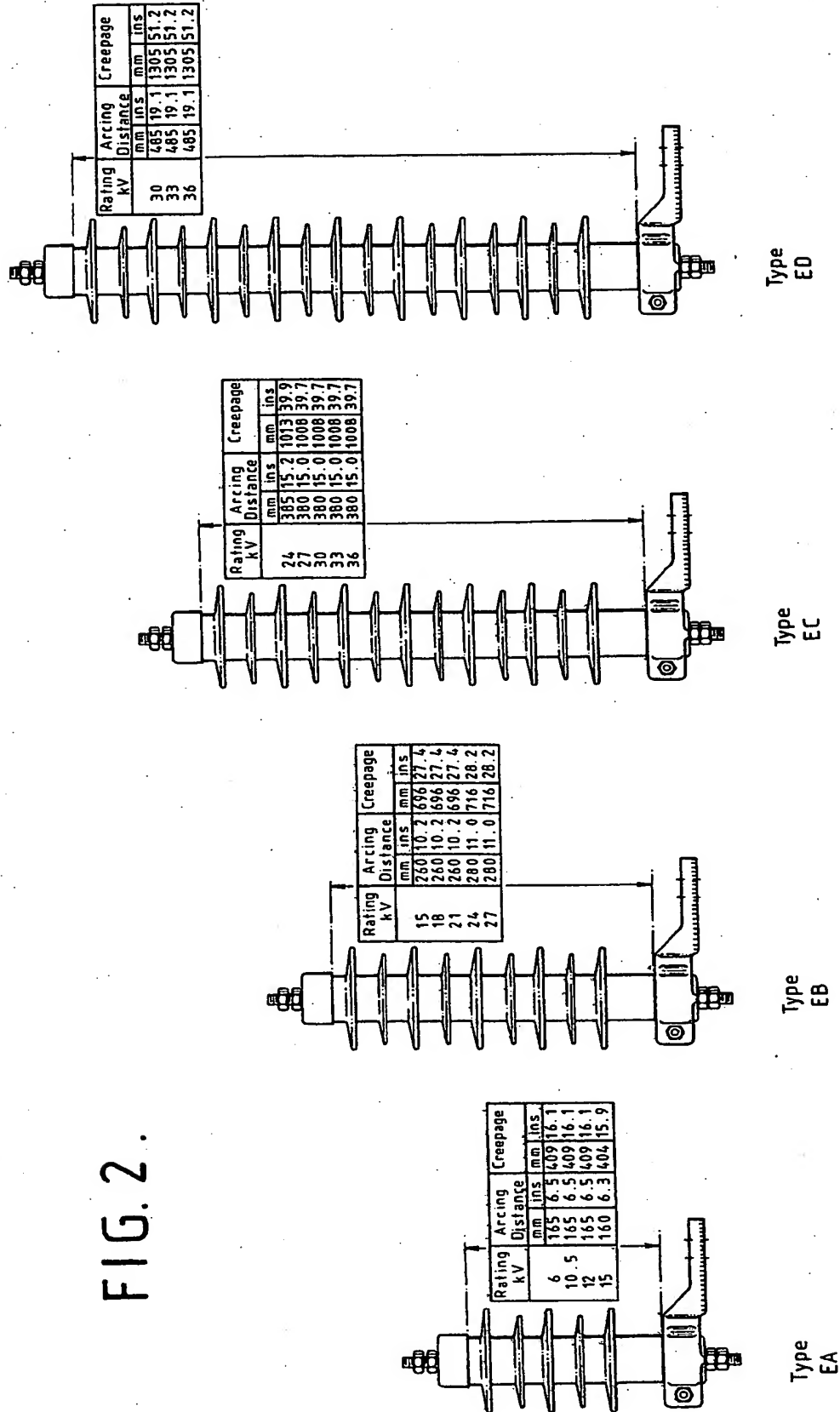


FIG. 2.





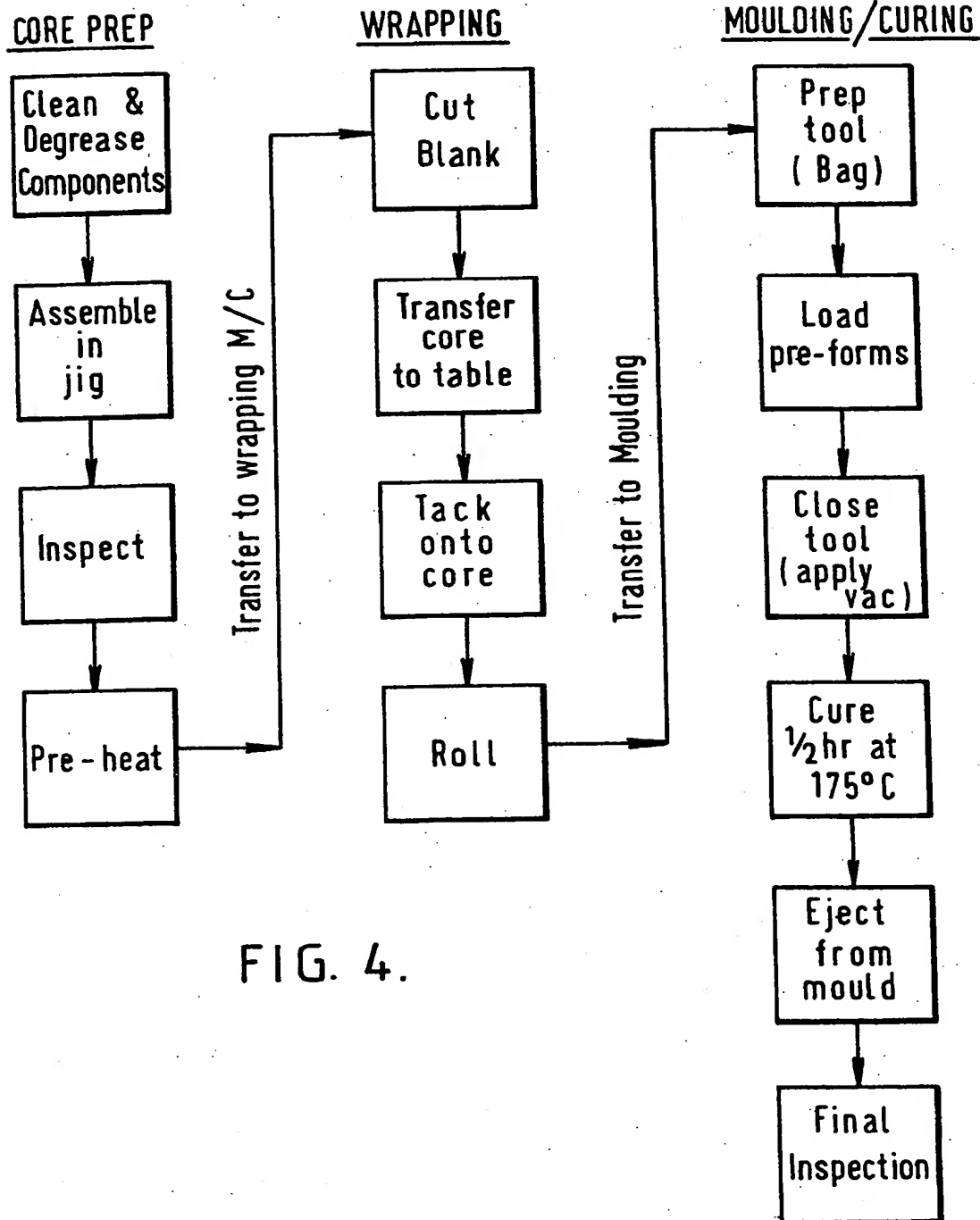
PROCESS FLOW CHART

FIG. 4.

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WRAPPING METHOD

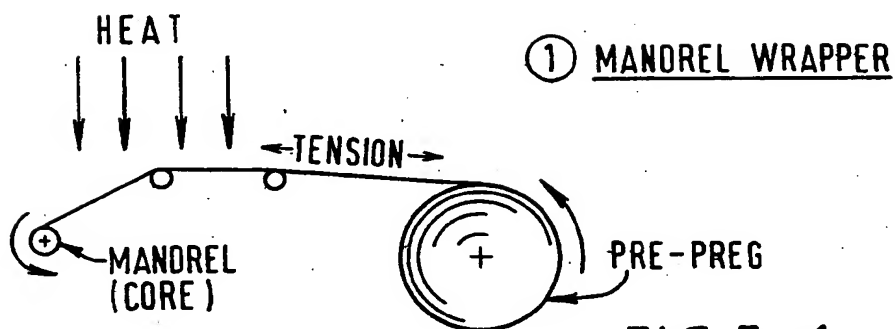


FIG. 5-1.

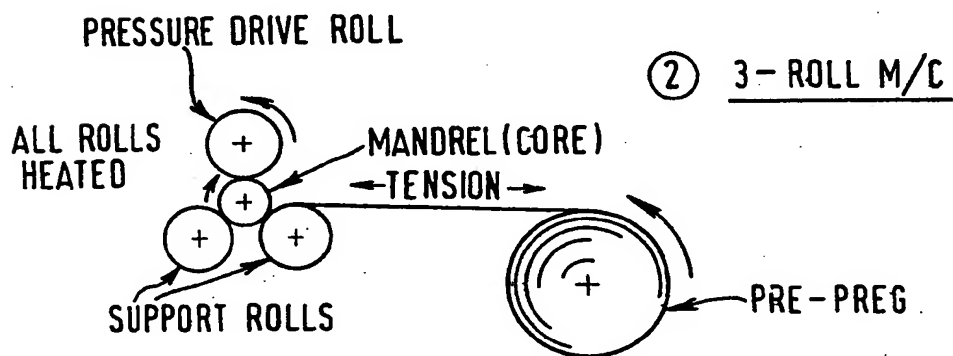


FIG. 5-2.

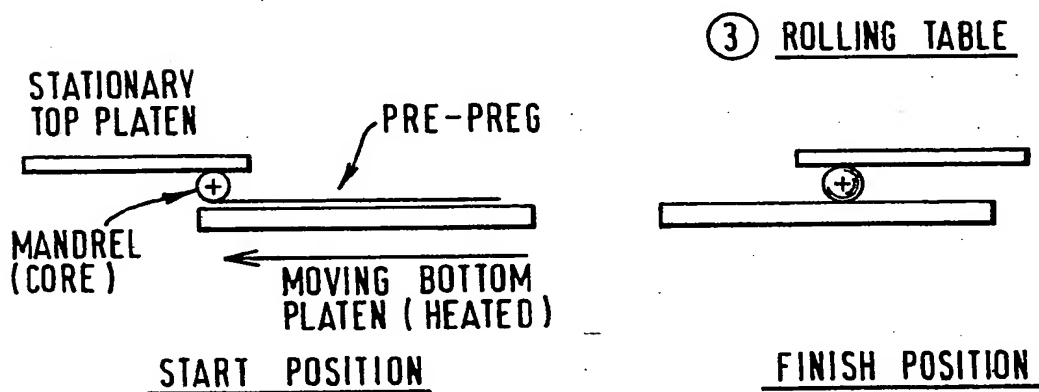


FIG. 5-3.

FIG. 6-1.

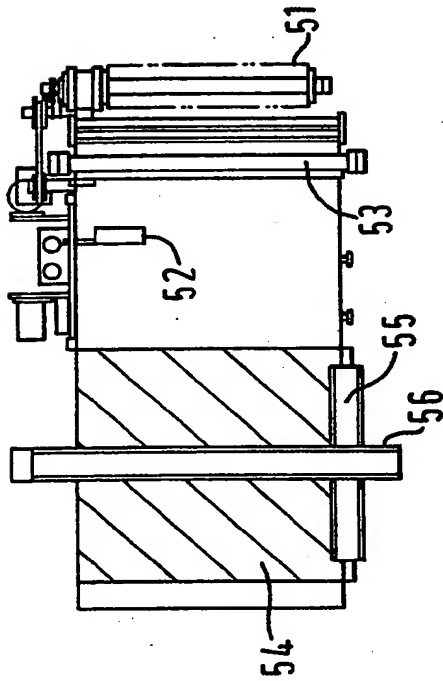


FIG. 6-6.

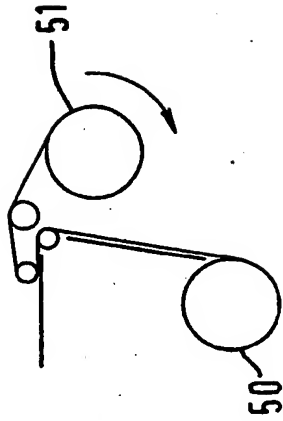


FIG. 6-5.

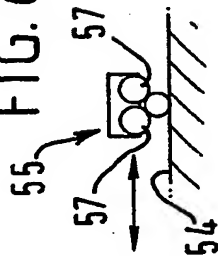


FIG. 6-3.

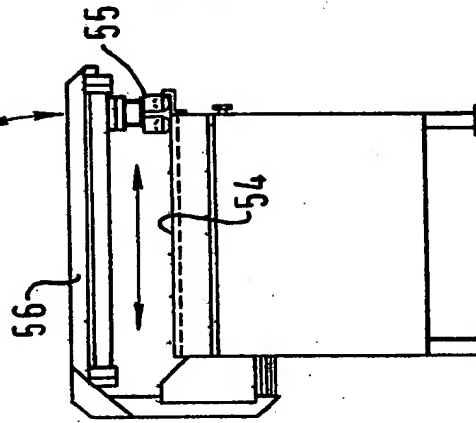


FIG. 6-2.

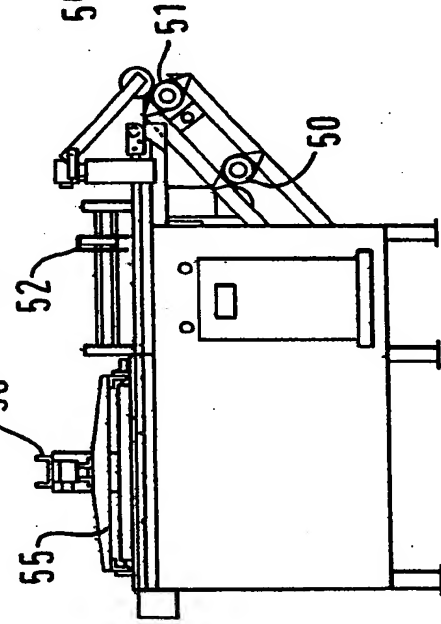
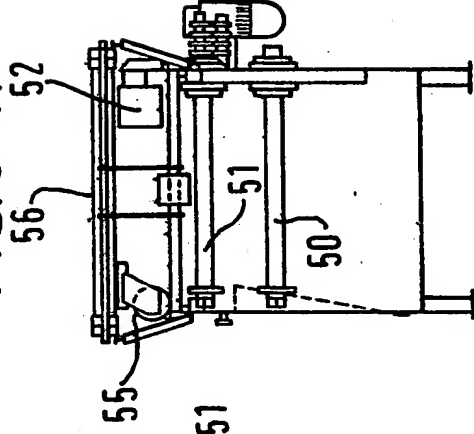


FIG. 6-4.



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FIG.8-1.

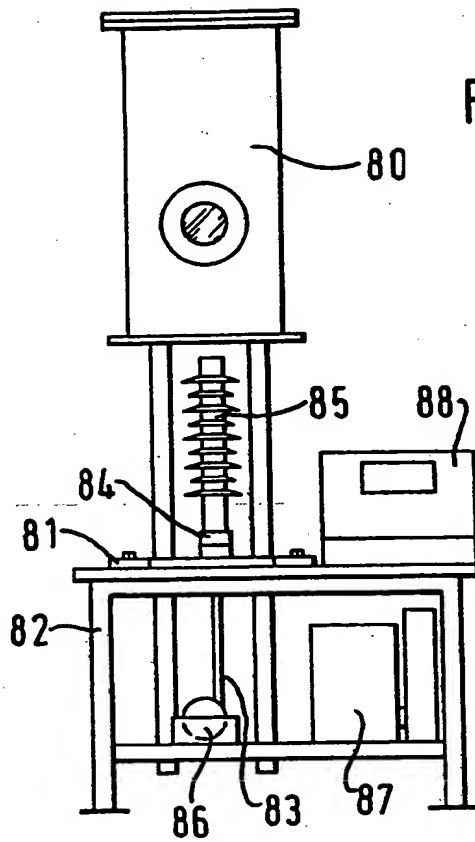
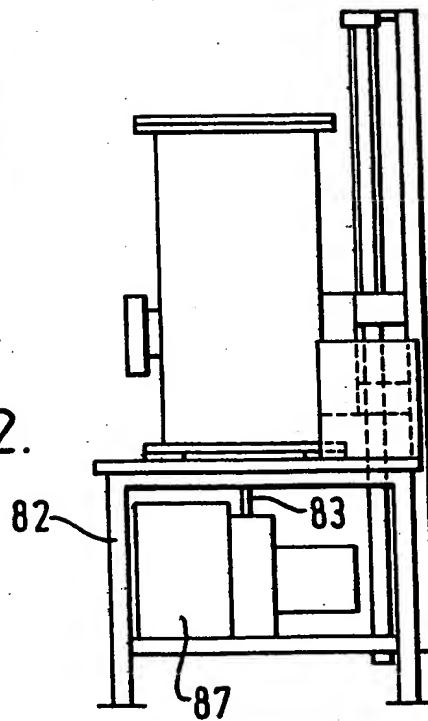


FIG.8-2.



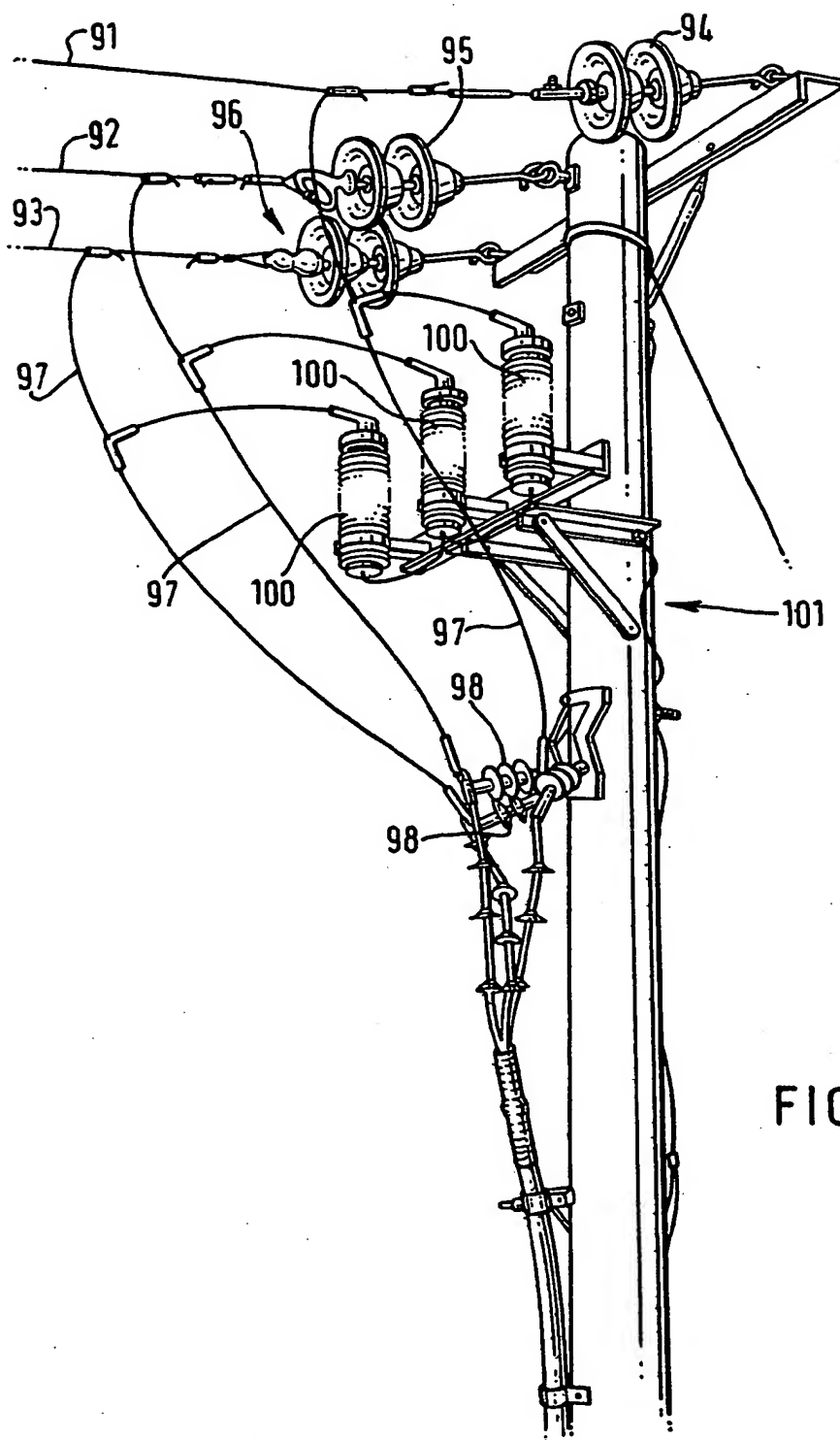


FIG. 9.

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

Application number: 87300808.0

Int. Cl.⁴: **H01C 7/12**

Date of filing: 29.01.87

Priority: 29.01.86 GB 8602112
29.10.86 US 924486

Date of publication of application:
19.08.87 Bulletin 87/34

Designated Contracting States:
AT BE CH DE ES FR GB GR IT LI LU NL SE

Date of deferred publication of the search report:
08.02.89 Bulletin 89/06

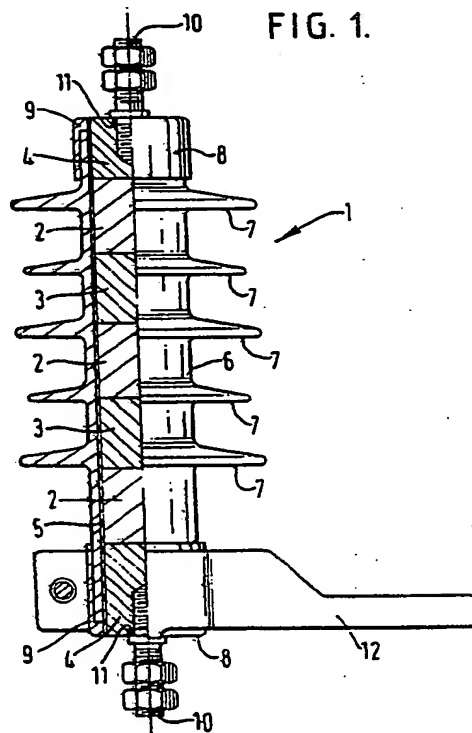
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Electrical surge arrester/diverter.

A distribution class surge arrester comprises a core formed of distributed zinc oxide varistor blocks, aluminium blocks acting as heat sinks and as spacers providing voltage grading and required arcing distances, and terminal blocks held in face to face contact by means of a glass reinforced epoxy shell which is formed by winding a pre-preg onto the assembled blocks and thermally curing under mould pressure within an evacuated mould. The core is housed within a polymeric shedded housing which is formed by shrinking a heat-shrink shedded sleeve onto the core with a sealant provided in the interface of the core and the sleeve, and end caps are sealed to the ends of the structure thus formed. The all solid-state arrester thus formed has performance and cost advantages over conventional porcelain housed arresters and furthermore has very considerable physical strength enabling it to serve additionally as a stand-off support insulator in situations where conventionally separate arrester and support insulators were required.



EP 0 233 022 A3



DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl.4)
A	DE-A-3 426 054 (BBC AG) * Claims 1,2,4; page 8, line 12 - page 9, line 24; figures 1,2 * --	1,5,16	H 01 C 7/12
A	US-A-4 404 614 (R.E. KOCK et al.) * Claims 1,3,5-7; figure 1 * --	1,2,5,16	
A	DE-A-3 002 014 (R.P. BRAGINSKIJ et al.) * Claim 1; page 11, paragraph 4 - page 12, paragraph 3; figures 1-3 * --	1-3,7	
A	EP-A-0 020 010 (RTE CORP.) * Claims 1,4; figure 1 * --	1,2	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.4)
A	RESEARCH DISCLOSURE, no. 245, September 1984, page 475, abstract no. 24541; Havant, Hampshire, GB "Insulator with surge arrester properties" * Whole abstract * --	17-20	H 01 C
P,X	DE-A-3 544 141 (HARVEY HUBBEL INC.) * Claims 1-5,10-15,23-26,34,35; page 13, paragraph 3 - page 14, paragraph 1; page 18, paragraphs 1,2 * --	1,5,6,8,13,15	
A	EP-A-0 049 908 (MITSUBISHI DENKI K.K.) TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.4) - / .		
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
The Hague		18-07-1988	DECANNIERE
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS			
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			



CLAIMS INCURRING FEES

The present European patent application comprised at the time of filing more than ten claims.

- ☐ All claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- ☐ Only part of the claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims and for those claims for which claims fees have been paid, namely claims:
- ☐ No claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims.

X LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirement of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

1. Claims 1-23: Surge arrester, its fabrication method and application
2. Claim 24: Vacuum oven

- ☐ All further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- ☐ Only part of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the inventions in respect of which search fees have been paid, namely claims:
- ☒ None of the further search fees has been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims,

namely claims: 1-23



. Application number

EP 87 30 0808

- 2 -

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT						- 2 -
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl.4)			
A	EP-A-0 004 350 (MITSUBISHI DENKI K.K.) -----					
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.4)			
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